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Reports - 10 Registry

DCI/IC 75-1942

13 March 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Discussion of the RONI During the NIO/LA Meeting

25X1 1. During the past two bi-weekly meetings (27 February and 13 March) [] has listed the Review of National Intelligence as one of the major topics of discussion. During the earlier meeting the RONI was introduced by the NIO and I gave a summary explanation of the document's purpose. But since most of the representatives had not had an opportunity to read it, full discussion was tabled until today's meeting.

25X1 2. [] opened today's discussion of the RONI by commenting that he thought the document served a useful purpose and that he agreed with the conclusions drawn in the section on Latin America, particularly those on overcoverage and on the lack of judgment. At that point he asked the OCI/CIA representative, [], to amplify earlier comments (made during the previous NIO meeting) concerning the problems inherent in coordination and how they effect judgmental language in current intelligence items. 25X1

25X1 3. [] stated that the coordination process tends to discourage judgment because, in part, analysts and their immediate supervisors do not understand the new definition of coordination, i.e., agreement or dissent, the latter which should be included in the article. Thus, those at the working level are, for the most part, still "coordinating" by compromise, which of course is not conducive to clear judgments. Furthermore, according to [], the coordination system itself does not easily accommodate dissent. He stated that during the process of coordinating an article, a dissenting viewpoint is almost impossible to receive from DIA or State, for example, in a timely fashion, since the approval for dissent rests at such a high level. This, in itself, encourages compromise. 25X1

25X1 4. [] stated that [] claim was valid but that problems with coordination were not solely responsible for the lack of judgment in many current intelligence items. As an example, he mentioned that certain by-line articles which appeared in the NID recently and which did not require coordination also did not contain 25X1

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clear judgments (though they could and should have). To the degree that the RONI highlights such problems, the NIO stated, it serves as a prod to the community to seek corrective action. And [redacted] for one, is going to look into the problem of coordination.

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5. Overcoverage was the next topic of discussion. The State/INR representative agreed with the conclusion in the RONI that there was too much day-to-day coverage of certain topics in current publications and not enough perspective. His colleague, also from INR, responded that reportorial items are normally event driven and written from only one day's take; therefore, it would be difficult to put more perspective in such articles. [redacted] commented that in his view an article in one of the current intelligence publications should give the reader more than what is happening; it should explain why. Other than in situations of high readership interest and sensitivity, the production community should not fill the pages of its current publications with step-by-step political intrigues within X country. Conversely, it should issue summary pieces which put the intrigues in perspective.

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6. During the course of the discussion, it was suggested by OCI that since INR had been able to increase its production of Intelligence Notes recently, the State Department might consider making contributions to the National Intelligence Daily. Surprisingly, the DIA representative did not know that they could do the same. Both agreed to look into the matter.

7. In short, the NIO/LA viewed the RONI as a constructive document and used it constructively.

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[redacted]
Major, USA

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